



United States Air Force

# ONLINE news

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Vol. 2, No. 4

The official USAF newspaper (<http://www.af.mil/newspaper>)

Feb. 2, 2000

## NEWSBYTES

### AF axes mandatory random weigh-in policy

Air Force units are no longer required to conduct monthly, random weigh-ins and will instead hold annual weigh-ins in conjunction with the unit's annual fitness testing.

According to Air Force personnel officials, commanders felt the requirement to conduct random weight checks took away valuable time from duty sections and required too much administrative support.

Commanders may still use their discretion to weigh individuals who appear over their maximum allowable weight, and remain responsible for conducting all other weigh-ins as required by Air Force instruction. The change gives commanders the responsibility to ensure their people are within standards at all times.

### AF contracts pilots for navigator training

In a move to save money and improve the operational readiness of the Air Force, the 562nd Flying Training Squadron began a four-month transition to contract T-43 pilots at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas.

Base officials expect savings of almost \$1 million over the period of the contract in addition to returning 26 active-duty pilots to operational commands.

There are currently 31 active-duty pilots flying T-43 training missions for the Joint Specialized Undergraduate Navigator Training and the Marine Aerial Navigation School programs. The 562 FTS operates 10 of the 11 Air Force T-43s.

## AF expands ACP window

WASHINGTON - Responding to requests from the field, the sign-up window for the newly restructured Aviation Continuation Pay Program has been expanded for fiscal 2000. The change took effect Jan. 31.

Eligible pilots no longer have to wait until they are within 90 days of their computed effective date to sign their ACP agreement. Rules for computing effective dates

Eligible pilots no longer have to wait until they are within 90 days of their computed effective date ...

of agreements/payments, eligibility criteria, payment options, and active duty service commitments remain unchanged.

"This change affects two groups of eligible pilots," said Lt. Col. Scott Frost, chief, rated force policy at the air staff, "initial eligible pilots, or those whose specialized undergraduate pilot training active duty service commitment expires in FY00; as well as pilots currently un-



*Captain Rob Tofil, an F-16 pilot from the 8th Fighter Wing, Kunsan Air Base, Korea, connects the oxygen mask to his helmet before a mission. (US Air Force Photo)*

der an FY99 or earlier agreement who plan to amend it under FY00 ACP terms or enter into an FY00 agreement once it expires."

Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, Lt. Gen. Donald Peterson, outlined the impetus for the ACP program's latest change. "This is in response to feedback we were receiving from the field questioning why members had to wait to sign up for the newly restructured ACP Program. After looking into it, we wholeheartedly agreed -- the sign-up window was too restrictive."

Colonel Frost said the restructured ACP Program should not be viewed as an entitlement. "This year's rates of compensation

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## DOD addresses BAH concerns

By Senior Airman A.J. Bosker  
Headquarters United States Air Force

WASHINGTON - Many Air Force members have voiced concerns over the recent annual adjustment to the Basic Allowance for Housing rates, according to defense officials.

"The goal of the BAH rate adjustment was to develop a system where military

members can be assured, based on their pay grade and dependency status, that they will have a constant out-of-pocket housing expense regardless of where in the country they are stationed," said Navy Capt. Elliott Bloxom, director of compensation, Department of Defense.

"For example, a senior airman stationed

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## Letters to the editor

U.S. Air Force Online News publishes letters based on their appeal to an Air Force-wide audience each week. Send your letter to the staff by completing the online form at <http://www.af.mil/newspaper/>

Due to the number of letters, not all letters can be published. Letters may be edited for grammar and length. Only letters accompanied by a valid name and email address will be considered.

## True value

While it may be true airmen in certain career fields are more valuable [in terms of money spent on training, etc.] to the Air Force than others, the selective reenlistment bonus system is a perfect example of why airmen are leaving by the thousands. Airmen in certain career fields aren't valuable, so they don't get rewarded for sticking around. When someone departs, the Air Force loses all their future potential ... What could be more valuable to the Air Force than seasoned NCOs and senior NCOs who mentor our younger airmen? ... As long as the Air Force sees its people's value based on the dollars required to train and keep them, it will continue to lose what is truly of value — the potential of every airman in every field.

**Staff Sgt. Marc Barnes**  
Dyess AFB, Texas

## Great job!

I applaud all of you who submit letters to the editor. I also commend the ONLINE news staff for having the courage and foresight to publish such letters. If we did not have folks

like you, we would never see changes to the system. Some readers might call you whiners but keep in mind that there was once a "whiner" from the 1920s, named Lt. Col. "Billy" Mitchell. We are now serving the fruits of his "whining." Again, thanks for your service. Great job, ONLINE news.

**Juan Gonzalez**  
Fort McNair, D.C.

## Vet is a vet!

If you want to retain or recruit troops you should increase veterans benefits. When I enlisted in 1978, I was told about great benefits. Spending four years in the service was a great experience and taught me a great deal about life. I wouldn't do it any different today! As a peacetime vet, I feel discriminated against when it comes to various benefits available to other combat veterans. I can't compare myself to any vet who served in a war or conflict, but I too swore to protect my country when I raised my right hand. A vet is a vet regardless of when he or she might have served!

**Joseph J. Carroll**  
Stewart ANGB, N.Y.

# Air Force readies for next IA challenge

**By Lt. Gen. William J. Donahue**  
*Air Force communications and information director*

**T**he biggest test of information assurance to date - entering the year 2000 - is now in the history books. The next hurdle is the first leap-year day of this century.

Between these two landmark events fittingly stands our Year 2000 Information Assurance Month. Our theme this year is aptly titled, "Information Assurance in the New Millennium."

This past year, we have worked hard to protect our critical information and information systems from intruders, but there is still much to do. While we are providing new and exciting ways to get useful information to the warfighters and decision makers, it comes with a set of thorny issues:

- How to adequately protect sensitive unclassified information while openly sharing it with those who need it for their mission;

- How to take advantage of new

software "bells and whistles" like mobile code without falling victim to its vulnerabilities;

- How to share information with our coalition partners so we can operate effectively while protecting our national interests and secrets; and

- How to bring our networks under the professional management control of the network control centers.

These issues all have one thing in common: all network users, whether network professionals or network citizens, must work together to keep our networks safe — to protect them like the "weapon system" they have become.

During IA month, we will concentrate on educating users on the importance of "safe network practices" - stronger passwords, safe file download practices, careful information handling, routine use of anti-virus software and strong software/hardware configuration management.

We will use this month as an opportu-



**Lt. Gen. Donahue**

nity to herald our best and brightest IA stars - those professionals who contributed the most to their bases in the area of IA in the last year. We have also established an annual Air Force Information Assurance Award for outstanding performance by an individual and organization. Winners of these awards will compete for national-level awards.

We will also focus on network users and their responsibility to be good network "citizens," partnering with network professionals to safeguard this vital weapon system.

With well-trained network professionals, well-equipped network control centers and network operations and security centers, and disciplined network citizens, we are well on the way to securing our networks.

For more about information assurance and Year 2000 Information Assurance Month, visit the IA month home page at <http://www.afca.scott.af.mil/ip/iaam00/indxpage.htm>.



## AF readies nests for F-22 Raptor, Global Hawk

**LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Va. (AFPN)** — The Air Force made two modernization program announcements Jan. 27 involving the F-22 Raptor and the Global Hawk unmanned aerial vehicle.

"Langley Air Force Base is the preferred alternative for the location of the first operational F-22 wing," said Lt. Gen. Hal Hornburg, Air Combat Command vice commander.

The final basing decision will be contingent upon the completion of appropriate environmental impact analysis process actions. This analysis will include a look at reasonable alternatives to Langley, and other proposed locations including Eglin AFB, Fla.; Tyndall AFB, Fla.; Elmendorf AFB, Alaska; and Mountain Home AFB, Idaho; plus a "no-action" alternative. Other alternatives may arise during the public scoping process, [where the general public has the opportunity to help identify the scope of issues to be analyzed in the environmental impact study], he said.

General Hornburg said the environmental analysis process would be completed in about two years. The analysis will examine areas like land use, airspace and safety issues, air and water quality, noise, socio-economic impacts, biological and cultural resources, quality of training and cumulative impacts of the final basing decision.

The F-22 air superiority fighter is being developed to replace the aging F-15 aircraft with initial operational capability projected for December 2005. The Air Force plans to purchase a total of 339 aircraft.

"The F-22 will guarantee American dominance over any future battlefield," he said.

*This story is available in its entirety online.*

# Safe, secure data

## Information Assurance month a tolling bell for individuals across the military spectrum

**By Staff Sgt. Cynthia Miller**  
*Headquarters United States Air Force*

**WASHINGTON** - In an age where computers have revolutionized the war fighter's capability, a new responsibility has been placed upon the individual.

That responsibility is Information Assurance, and to emphasize the importance of safe and secure data for Air Force operations, the service has designated February as Information Assurance Month.

"Information Assurance is one of our core technologies because the Air Force is moving to be a much more electronic service," said Secretary of the Air Force F. Whitten Peters. "All of our thrust has been to become more efficient by using the networks we have in both our business and expeditionary operations."

The Information Assurance program began four years ago after a dismal three-month period of repeated, dangerous in-

trusions into Air Force networks, capped off by the defacing of the Headquarters Air Force home page.

"Our goal now is to raise the level of education and awareness throughout the Air Force," the secretary said. "One of the most important aspects of what we're doing is reminding everybody of the need to take care of personal security, to change passwords, and to treat networks as the important business systems they are."

Ultimately, personal security is going to keep the network secure."

The importance of Information Assurance was reinforced by recent preparation for the 2000 rollover.

As the nation, government and military become dependent on information and information systems, the capability to identify the threats, perform countermeasures, and carry out disaster and contingency plans combine to ensure uninterrupted mission operations.

*This article available in its entirety online.*



## Quality: process gets simplified

**By Tech. Sgt. Michael Spaits**  
*Headquarters United States Air Force*

**WASHINGTON** - Quality isn't going away, but the Air Force is making some major changes in the way it's applied by simplifying and focusing on "operationalizing" quality through mission-essential tasks and improving mission capability.

"If we perform our assigned mission tasks with excellence and improve that performance in a measurable way, we are operationalizing quality," said Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Michael E. Ryan.

To help units get started, the Air Force has published guidelines explaining the

processes, procedures and tasks associated with operationalizing quality in the Air Force. Air Force Instruction 90-1102, Performance Management, focuses on how mission-essential tasks are accomplished, and how using Performance Management principles will improve Air Force organizations.

"We eventually called it 'Performance Management,' but that's a term. What it really is, is trying to put very clearly in front of ourselves the things we need to do in the Air Force, and then figure out how to do them better," General Ryan said.

*This article available in its entirety online.*



## DOD addresses BAH concerns

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at Minot Air Force Base, N.D., might have a \$130 out-of-pocket cost for housing," he said. "Now, if the senior airman were to receive orders to a base where the cost of living is significantly higher, the new higher rate of BAH for that geographic area would cover all but the same \$130 out-of-pocket cost for housing.

"Before FY98, our housing allowances had two components that were established based on what service members reported they were spending on housing," Captain Boxom said. "The first element, Basic Allowance for Quarters, was adjusted by the pay raise amount and provided a floor for payments. The Variable Housing Allowance was based upon service members' reported expenditures above the BAQ rate.

"There were inequities in the old way business was conducted," he said.

"Junior people, with little or no disposable income, living in high-cost areas would move into a smaller house or apartment or live in an undesirable neighborhood," he said. "This economizing led them to report lower housing costs, generating lower allowances. Senior people, many with larger disposable incomes, moved into larger homes or apartments and spent more on housing. Their higher reported costs gen-

erated higher housing allowances."

According to the captain, money added in past years to lower out-of-pocket housing costs had little effect. The allowance increases often would be used to secure a larger house or apartment, leading to even higher reported expenditures. This created a cycle of inflated allowances in some locations for some grades that would not be used for their intended purpose: covering out-of-pocket expenses.

The new method of determining housing allowances shifts from what members report they spend on housing to what housing actually costs in a civilian community.

"The objective is to have our people enjoy the same standard of living, in terms of housing, as anyone in the local community earning the same amount of money," he said.

To accomplish this, Captain Bloxom said they have a contractor look at civilians in a specific geographic area with comparable incomes as military members and base the housing allowance standard on where those civilians live and their cost for housing. The contractor annually evaluates and averages the rent, utilities and cost for renter's insurance. These three elements are then used to determine the actual cost for housing.

*This article available in its entirety online.*

## 'Experience' reconnects recruiting

By Tech Sgt. John Hancock  
Air Force Recruiting Service  
Public Affairs

**RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AETCNS)**—The U.S. Air Force — known for controlling the skies — is taking to the road in an effort to increase the public's awareness of the service.

Air Force Recruiting Service, in a move designed to "reconnect" with America, unveiled the "Air Force Experience" here Jan. 25 — a traveling display featuring an F-16 Fighting Falcon static display, a pair of tractor-trailer rigs housing flight simulators, a briefing room and interactive kiosks.

"We know nothing replaces seeing first-hand just a bit of our Air Force ... and that's what the 'Air Force Experience' is all about," said Brig. Gen. Peter U. Sutton, AFRS commander. "This (the "Experience") takes a piece of the Air Force to the American public."

*This article available in its entirety online.*

## AF announces expanded ACP sign-up window

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encourage long-term commitment. Pilots need to view restructured ACP as our enlisted force views a selective reenlistment bonus," he said. "Depending on the impact of FY00's program, we may not have to offer similar rates or agreement lengths in

the future."

General Peterson added, "We understand how important this career decision is to pilots and their families. As such, we fully support any initiatives that will provide greater flexibility to those making these big decisions."

To ensure fair and equitable compensa-

tion to eligible members, General Peterson said the Air Force will continue to review the ACP program and make adjustments when necessary.

Comprehensive details on the FY00 ACP Program can be found on the Air Force Personnel Center's Internet site: <http://afas.afpc.randolph.af.mil/acp/>



## U.S. Air Force ONLINE news

U.S. Air Force ONLINE news is produced each Wednesday by the Secretary of the Air Force Office of Public Affairs and is available via Air Force Link (<http://www.af.mil/newspaper>). This funded U.S. Air Force newspaper is an authorized publication for Air Force members and their families. Content is endorsed by the Department of the Air Force, but is not necessarily the views of or endorsed by the U.S. Government or Department of Defense. Editorial offices: SAF/PAI, 901 N. Stuart Suite 605, Arlington VA 22203. Telephone (703) 696-7832, Fax (703) 696-9162. Please post on unit bulletin boards and pass this copy on to others who need current Air Force news and information. Reproduce as needed.

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